

30 March – 2 April
Sydney Town Hall

MOZART & SCHUBERT



SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON **Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley** AC QC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Orchestra’s first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australia-born Simone Young has been the Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Designate since 2020. She commences her role as Chief Conductor in 2022 as the Orchestra returns to the renewed Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra’s versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

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MOZART & SCHUBERT

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor
DAVID ELTON trumpet

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Symphony in G minor, K.183/173dB
Allegro con brio
Andante
Menuetto e trio
Allegro

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

Trumpet Concerto in E flat
Allegro
Andante
Allegro

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Symphony No.9 in C, D.944, 'Great'
Andante – Allegro ma non troppo
Andante con moto
Scherzo (Allegro vivace – Trio)
Allegro vivace

ESTIMATED DURATIONS

24 minutes, 13 minutes,
interval 20 minutes,
48 minutes

The concert will conclude
at approximately 10pm
(Wednesday, Friday,
Saturday) and 3.30pm
(Thursday)

COVER IMAGE

David Elton,
photo by Ben Morris

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor

With a career spanning more than 20 years as a gifted cello soloist, orchestral musician, and now conductor, Umberto Clerici has gained a reputation as an artist of diverse and multifaceted talents.

Umberto began his career as a virtuoso cellist making his solo debut at the age of 17 performing Haydn's D Major cello concerto in Japan. After years of performing on the stages of the world's most prestigious concert halls, Umberto took up the position as Principal Cellist of the Royal Opera House in Turin, which he held for four years. In 2014, he was then appointed as the Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until last season.

It was in Sydney in 2018 that Umberto made his conducting debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. Following a rapid trajectory of conducting engagements, Umberto is now in high demand with the major symphony orchestras throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Future conducting highlights in Australia include returns to the podiums for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 2022 Umberto also looks forward to his debuts with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

As a cellist, Umberto is beloved by Australian audiences and has performed internationally as a soloist at New York's Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musikverein, the great Shostakovich Hall of St Petersburg, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, the Salzburg Festival and in 2012 he performed Tchaikovsky's "Rococo variations" under the baton of Valery Gergiev.



Umberto Clerici

Photo: Jay Patel

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DAVID ELTON trumpet

Currently Principal Trumpet of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, David Elton's performance career has seen him hold positions with many of Australia's and the world's leading orchestras, most recently as Principal Trumpet with the London Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed as guest Principal Trumpet with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Australian World Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic.

As an educator, David has served on the faculties of many of Australia's tertiary institutions and the Royal College of Music in London. He is currently on the faculties of both the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne, and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

An enthusiastic mentor of young musicians, David regularly appears as a guest at workshops for community groups and youth orchestras. As an active soloist, David is in demand having performed concertos with a variety of ensembles including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and Canberra Symphony Orchestra. Active as a chamber musician, he has joined other musicians performing at festivals including the Bendigo Chamber Music Festival and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville.



David Elton
Photo: Ben Morris

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Minor key symphonies were relatively rare in the 1770s and Mozart only wrote two: this and the late K.550 (also in G minor). But composers like Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach and Joseph Haydn had experimented with 'extreme' modes of expression: minor tonality, dramatic gestures including syncopation (insistent off-beat patterns), hefty unison passages, sudden changes of volume, and a self-conscious use of Baroque counterpoint. These are now often known as *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) works.

Mozart's first G minor Symphony displays many of the stylistic traits of Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* work, and its orchestration – including two pairs of horns (for extended tonal and dynamic range) and the independent use of the bassoons (that is, not merely to stiffen the bass line) – gives the work its dark colour and rhetorical force. It opens with driving syncopations that outline, in unison, a jagged falling 'baroque' figure that is answered by a phrase built on an emphatic minor arpeggio. The second group of themes is in the relative major key, B flat – a contrast to which Milos Forman provided a brilliant visual analogy in the film *Amadeus*: Mozart's (fictional) nemesis, the mad, wounded composer Salieri is carried through snow-bound streets in the minor key sections, while dancers whirl in a bright ballroom to the major key themes. As the movement's recapitulation unfolds, the major-key themes appear in the minor, with disturbing new implications.

As the four-note figure dominates the first movement, a tiny three-note 'cell' economically powers the E flat major *Andante*. The G minor Menuetto has stark unisons and octaves, but a contrasting pastoral trio for winds in the major key. Then, more *Sturm und Drang* in the finale, made even more substantial by Mozart's insistence, as in the first movement, that both halves should be repeated.

By 1796 Haydn was established as one of Europe's most famous composers, with experience with the large orchestras of London and Paris. Like many composers, Haydn took great interest in the technological advances of instrument-building, and in 1796 wrote what would be his last concerto for an *organisierte Trompete* (organised trumpet). The trumpet of the day was a simple metal tube, like a bugle, and thus was very limited in the number of notes it could play. Good for fanfares; less so for tunes. Viennese court-trumpeter Anton Weidinger was one of several players who tried various ways to extend the instrument, and came up with a set of holes and keys that worked wonders; Haydn was no doubt only too glad to write a piece to show it off, and used every available note on the new instrument. The piece begins with a somewhat humorous gesture as the trumpet plays short 'fanfarish' motifs before embarking on the kind of florid passages only made possible by Weidinger's system.



Mozart in 1770



Joseph Haydn

ABOUT THE MUSIC

One contemporary noted that the new instrument sounded a bit like an oboe – the key system inevitably meant a loss of some of the trumpet's brilliance. But Haydn made a virtue of this, giving the instrument nostalgic, lyrical lines (and not just in the slow movement) before again exploiting the trumpet's new agility in the finale.

Among papers found after Schubert's death was a score of his 'Great' Symphony in C, which the composer's brother showed to Robert Schumann in 1838. Fired with enthusiasm, Schumann sent it to Felix Mendelssohn in Leipzig, and in 1839 the work was performed there by the Gewandhaus Orchestra. In a famous letter to his then fiancée, Clara Wieck, Schumann described the rehearsal he had attended:

I have been in paradise today!...I was supremely happy, and had nothing left to wish for, except that you were my wife, and that I could write such symphonies myself.

Schumann's enthusiasm was generated in part by the 'heavenly length' of the piece, which he compared to a novel in four volumes; Schubert had, clearly, hit on a new way of structuring large spans of symphonic time, and this would have radical implications for the form as cultivated by composers from Schumann to Mahler.

Far from being Schubert's last word the symphony was completed in 1826 – well before his death. And while the Leipzig performance was the work's public premiere, in fact the symphony hadn't sat under Schubert's bed all that time: the composer had sent a copy to the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (ancestor of the Vienna Philharmonic) in 1826, and the orchestra, which paid Schubert a small gratuity, had read through the work but decided it was too long and 'difficult' for players and audiences alike. (This remained a stumbling-block for the work well into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Mendelssohn had to withdraw it from a performance in London owing to a player rebellion, despite the fact that his Leipzig players adored the piece, and Hans von Bülow found aspects of it as baffling as the music of his erstwhile disciple, Mahler.)

The symphony's challenges and joys both stem from its balance of classical principles and, for want of a better term, Romantic aspirations – it is after all roughly contemporary with Beethoven's Ninth and Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. Schubert uses versions of classical sonata design in three of the four movements; his orchestration, with its horn calls and distant, soft trombones, evokes the Romanticism of Mendelssohn and Weber.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction that creates tension before the outbreak of faster material. So far, so classical, but in addition the theme (on unison horns) that begins the work also contains the seeds of



Franz Schubert

ABOUT THE MUSIC

much of the symphony's subsequent material – especially the dotted (long-short) rhythm in the theme's second bar, which pervades the whole work. Spinning out material from a small cell recalls the examples of Haydn and Beethoven, though Schubert balances this concentration with his characteristic display of apparently endless new melodies. But from Beethoven too, he learned the power of reiteration, and at various points in the piece creates long stretches of increasingly exciting music out of the forceful repetition of short, strongly-profiled motives. The tremendous tension built up in the first movement is resolved when Schubert brings back the opening horn theme transformed into something much less dreamy.

The slow movement's minor-key theme has been described by musicologist Donald Tovey as a 'heartbreaking show of spirit in adversity'. Certainly Schubert's health was, at this time of his life, deteriorating thanks to syphilis and the then-common treatments for the disease, but the work is in no way a document of self-pity. Using a device common in his songs, Schubert takes his music into the major mode for dramatic, and possibly optimistic, contrast.

The Scherzo maintains the large-scale thinking of the rest of the work, and Schubert generates great energy by the use of inexorably buoyant rhythms and a string of beautiful themes.

The finale is likewise of a proportion to match the previous movements and is as full of thematic invention. It encompasses material and emotional states as different as what Tovey identifies as 'fairy music' and gestures 'as terrible as anything in Beethoven or Michelangelo'.

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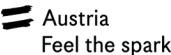
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